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RETAIL COUNCIL OF NEW YORK STATE NAMES MELISSA O'CONNOR AS PRESIDENT AND CEO

The Retail Council of New York State's Board of Directors – led by Chairwoman Alayna Alderman, Vice President of Record Archive in Rochester, New York – has voted unanimously to select Melissa O'Connor as its next President and CEO. Melissa was elected formally at the November 12 board meeting and will be the first woman to serve in this role since the organization was established in 1931.

Melissa previously held the position of executive vice president and director of government relations for the Retail Council of New York State. She will continue to oversee the Retail Council's strong and effective advocacy efforts, while also focusing on her vision for the company over the next few years. Ms. O'Connor succeeds Ted Potrikus, who retired after 31 years with the organization.

"Melissa brings more than 15 years of experience and passion to her new role as President and CEO of the Retail Council of New York State," Alderman said. "She has the full support and confidence of the Board to lead the organization today and well into the future. Her reputation in government relations, coupled with her deep understanding of the various issues and challenges facing small and large retailers alike, makes her the best choice to effectively move our organization forward."

Ms. O'Connor joined the Retail Council as government relations associate in 2005, and was promoted to assistant director of government relations in 2010. She has served as executive vice president and director of government relations since 2014.

"I am deeply honored to have the unwavering confidence and support of the Board of Directors and our members," said O'Connor. "The issues facing retailers today are many, and I am committed to advancing the retail industry's public policy priorities at the state and local level. It is not lost on me that this year has been particularly challenging for the independent stores that we represent. In addition to our advocacy efforts, we will continue to work tirelessly to save them money on the products and services they need to operate their business. There is a lot of work to be done on our members' behalf and I am thrilled to lead this organization into the future."

Ms. O'Connor holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh and a master's in business administration from the College of St. Rose. She resides in Latham, New York with her husband and two children.

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The Retail Council of New York State is the retail industry's leading trade association in the state, representing nearly 5,000 stores of every size and sort. In addition to serving as the voice of the retail industry in the state Capitol, the Retail Council offers a variety of money-saving services to its members, including credit card processing, workers' compensation insurance and disability insurance.